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EXCISE

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SUBJECT: PERIPHERAL: ITALIAN FOREIGN OFFICE OBSERVATIONS ON ALBANIA

The following remarks on the situation in Albania and certain aspects of Italy's relations with Albania are based on observations made by the official of the Italian Foreign Office who is responsible for Albanian affairs in a recent conversation with an Embassy officer:

1. Soviet Control in Albania: It is the official Italian view that Soviet control of Albania remains as strong today as it ever was in the past

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In support of his thesis that Soviet control remains strong in Albania, the Foreign Office official has made available to the Embassy two reports on the Albanian situation informal translations of which are enclosed. The first is a memorandum prepared by the Italian mission in Tirana purporting to define the nature of Soviet control in Albania and the agencies through which this control is exercised. The second is a despatch from the Italian mission in Belgrade describing

On this occasion the Foreign Office source again underlined the importance of Albania in Italian public opinion, pointing out that the province of Puglia after all is only 65 miles from the Albanian coast and it would be difficult, at least in the south of Italy, for any Italian government to explain away any developments concerning Albania in which Italian interests were not safeguarded.

2. The Italian Mission in Tirana: The Foreign Office official described at some length the difficulties which beset the operations of the Italian mission in Tirana. He said, for example, that the mission is completely cut off from contacts with the local population, its members are under constant surveillance, and even its premises are illuminated at night by powerful search lights.

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prevent clandestine contact with Albanian locals. Communications with the mission are exceedingly difficult; since the death of Stalin, for example, communication with Rome has been confined to cable traffic since, with the cessation of Soviet air service through Sofia to Tirana, it has not been possible for Italian diplomatic couriers to get into Albania. Some thought was given to reinstitution of the Italian courier vessel service across the Adriatic (the SS Oltranto), but the idea has been shelved.

The Foreign Office is now contemplating the institution of courier service via Vienna, Sofia, Costanza by rail and from Costanza to Durazzo and return by Rumanian ship. There has been discussion in the Italian Foreign Office of the advisability of closing the mission in Tirana, but the Foreign Office view at present is that it is a valuable source of information on a country about which little is known and therefore should remain open so long as budgetary considerations permit.

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3. Albanian Complaint of Refugee Activities: On April 24 the Albanian Legation in Rome submitted an official protest to the Italian Government, complaining that certain Albanian broadcasts by the Italian radio had contained "all sorts of calumnies on the actual situation in Albania and against the government of the People's Republic of Albania" and demanding that the Italian Government turn over to the Albanian Government certain Albanian refugees who were described in the note as war criminals. The Foreign Office source stated that the Italian Government has simply ignored the Albanian protest despite a follow-up request by the Albanian mission in Rome for action. Most of the Albanian refugees who were named in the note, it may be noted parenthetically, are affiliated with either the Blocco Indipendente or the Balli Kombatar, which are the two refugee organizations outside the National Committee for a Free Albania.

4. Exit Permits: Recently requests for exit permits for the Minister Counselor and Second Secretary of the Albanian mission in Rome, together with their families, were submitted to the Ministry. The Ministry's initial thought, in the light of the hostile nature of the Albanian note of April 24, was that the move which would result in a one-man Albanian representation in Rome, might be the precursor to a break in Italo-Albanian relations. Further inquiry, however, revealed that similar requests had been made by the Rumanian and Bulgarian missions; it was assumed therefore that there was no political significance in the Albanian move. It was apparent that the satellite diplomats for whom exit permits had been requested simply intended to give up their Rome residence during the summer months and to catch the return trip of the Rumanian ship, Transylvania, which has normal ports-of-call in their homelands. Queried on the Italian use of the exit permits, the source explained that the system was applied only to satellite and Soviet diplomatic personnel and had been instituted two years ago in reciprocity for similar treatment of Italian official personnel assigned to Soviet orbit countries.

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The Foreign Office source pointed out that recently the counselor of the Albanian Legation in Rome had made friendly overtures to a junior official of

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the Ministry, and this development plus the coincidence of the request for exit permits by other satellite missions convinced the Ministry that the Albanian move was simply routine.

For the Ambassador

Edward L. Freers
Edward L. Freers

First Secretary of Embassy

✓ Enclosures: *ATTN*

1. Translation of Albanian Note of April 24, 1953 (Unclassified)

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TRANSLATION

Legation of the People's Republic of Albania in Italy

The Legation of the People's Republic of Albania in Italy presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic and has the honor to bring to its attention the following:

On the evening of December 2, 1952 the Italian radio, RAI, third program, made a broadcast allegedly dedicated to the anniversary of Albanian independence on November 28. In reality this broadcast contained only every kind of calumny on the actual situation and against the government of the People's Republic of Albania as well as abject declarations against Albania by a certain Eqrem Vlora and other war criminals and enemies of the Albanian people who had fled to Italy--declarations which had been formalized at a reunion of these latter under the auspices of RAI.

Several weeks later during the Christmas holidays of 1952, RAI organized special broadcasts aimed at the People's Democracies, in the course of which it broadcast statements by war criminals and traitors who had fled from these countries and taken refuge in Italy. RAI broadcast among others a statement of a calumnious and base nature against the People's Republic of Albania read by a Gjon P. Gjomarkaj, criminal and enemy of the Albanian people.

These hostile acts toward the People's Republic of Albania, its government and its people, have been committed by an institution which is dependent on and under the direct control of the Italian Government. There is no doubt that such acts reflect the hostile attitude of the Italian Government toward the People's Republic of Albania, and they are in direct accord with the position taken by the former on the question of war criminals: in accordance with the terms of the treaty of peace with Italy, the Italian Government is expected to arrest and turn over to the Albanian Government all Albanian war criminals who have taken refuge in Italy. Now, instead of fulfilling this precise and peremptory obligation of the Treaty of Peace and of replying in a positive way to the just demands made by the Albanian Government in this regard, the Italian Government not only refuses so to act but on the contrary it supports and openly employs these war criminals with hostile purposes toward the People's Republic of Albania and the Albanian people, thus acting in flagrant violation of the treaty of peace and in a fashion incompatible with normal diplomatic relations existing between the two countries. The trials in Tirana against Albanian war criminals outfitted in Italy and sent illegally to Albania in order to carry out acts of espionage, diversion and crime, have provided ample evidence of this attitude of the Italian Government.

In addition to the above mentioned cases numerous recent facts demonstrate that these individuals continue to carry out on Italian territory freely, in a manner uninterrupted and even intensified, their criminal activities against the People's Republic of Albania: thus among others in the course of the last two months according to the Italian press in various cities of Italy such as Marsala, Trapani, Crotone, Parma, Nicastro, Milan numerous public conferences

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inciting hatred and war against the People's Republic of Albania and its people have been held by criminals of war and enemies of the Albanian people, Ernest Koliqi, Gjon P. Gjomarkaj, Viktor Koliqi and others.

It is beyond argument that without approval and previous authorization of the Italian Government such acts directed against the People's Republic of Albania could not take place on Italian territory. The placing of the Italian radio at the disposal of war criminals and enemies of the Albanian people, authorization of their public meetings and the participation in these meetings by Italian authorities as reported by the press confirm this.

The Legation of the People's Republic of Albania formally protests these hostile activities carried out on Italian territory and turned against the People's Republic of Albania, under and with the approval of the Italian Government, and, in conformity with the treaty of peace with Italy, it reiterates once more the demand of its government for the arrest and delivery of Albanian war criminals who have taken refuge in Italy. Furthermore, it considers it necessary to invite the Italian Government to put an end to these activities and to this hostile attitude toward the People's Republic of Albania and declares that it holds the Italian Government responsible for the consequences which might flow from acts of the type described above.

The Legation of the People's Republic of Albania in Italy takes occasion of the request to express to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic the assurance of its high consideration.

Rome, April 24, 1953

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Palazzo Chigi
Rome.

Translated from the French MToon

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